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The Athenian Mercury.

Tuesday, January 1, 1695

Quest. 1. *What sort of Creature was the* Leviathan?

Answ. We have done with his *Brother Behemoth* already, and dispatcht all the *Rabbis* wonderful *Tales* about 'em both. We shall now proceed in our *enquirys* concerning this other *monster*, who is about as hard to be *found* out as the scripture says he is to be *tam'd*, and we shall regulate our enquirys concerning him, as we did in the former, by the methods of the sacred *writer*. *Job.* 41. 1. "Canst thou draw out *Leviathan* with a *Hook*, or his *Tongue* with a *Cord* which thou letteſt down? 1st, for the *Word*. The learned *Bochart* derives this *Leviathan*, or as *Buxtorf* tells us the *Jews* write and pronounce it *Leviathan*, from an *Arabick root* that signifys, *winding* in *folds*, *contorting*, or *twisting*, as a Serpent does his *longæ Volumina caudæ*, a word of the same original being us'd in the *Arabic* writers for the very *folds* of a *Serpent*, with which as *Solinus* tells us, the *Dragon*, or greater Serpent (the word by which the 70 here render *Leviathan*) often winds about even the *Elephants Legs* and *Thighs*, and so hampers him that he falls to the *Earth*; and *Knox*, in his ingenious History of *Ceylon*, gives an account, much of the same nature, that they'll fasten on a *Stag* or other great Beast in that manner and hold 'em *immovable*, and the prophetical *Writer* seems to allude to some such *property* in those animals, when he speaks of the Dragons drawing some of the *stars* to the ground with his *Tail*, that is, with his *long voluminous folds*, with which the *Pytho* is also describ'd) suppos'd to reach from *Earth* to *Heaven*. *Leviathan* therefore, whoever he be, must have at least something of the *shape* of a *Serpent*, but a *Whale* is as much like a *Horse* as a *Dragon*, and can as soon fly o're the mountains tops as turn his *unwieldy mountanous* body into such *folds* as seem included in the very name of the *Leviathan*, who is expressly call'd by *Isaiah* "that *crooked Serpent*, ὄφιν σκολιὸν, as the 70. Which *Bochart* thinks in that place and several others, signifys the *Whale*, instancing in *Ps.* 74. 14. and 104. 26. Tho we must be forc'd to *dissent* from him there, because he does from himself, and thereby destroys his own *Hypothesis*, at least renders it extreamly weak and uncertain, for if in so many places he grants *Leviathan* is taken for the *Whale*, why not as well here too? Tho we shall anon prove there's no more necessity to take it in that sence there then here. And our opinion is that *Leviathan* is always taken for the *Crocodile*, no where for the *Whale* in H. Scriptures, tho *Thannin* seems, we confess, in some places, to include both, but most properly to signify *Whales*, and other *great Fishes, and Sea-Monsters*.

V. 1. Wilt thou draw out his *Tongue* with a *Cord*? But here's a difficulty, the most authors say the *Crocodile* has no *Tongue*, and then how can he be the *Leviathan*? So not only *Herodotus* and *Pliny*, but even *Plutarch*, *Diodorus*, *Ammianus*, and *Aristotle* himself, But if there were a thousand more of 'em, men would take the Liberty to believe their own Eyes before 'em, which show us it has as much a *Tongue* as any man or Woman, only 'tis not so *long*, nor does it make so much use of it, as some other animals; and in this sence are these very authors already quoted, to be understood, and so indeed they explain themselves in other places, *Aristotle* instancing particularly in *Crocodiles* among those ovipatous Creatures which really have *Tongues*, yet seems to have none, because as it were ty'd down, or *fastn'd* to their under *Jaw*, as in *Fishes*; and the same is asserted by a hundred modern *Writers*, *Cardan*, *Scaliger*, our *Purchas*, and others who have since *dissected* 'em, which had the 70 been aware of, they needed not have been so afraid of that *Vulgar mistake*, as to change his *Tongue* into his *Nose* in their Translation, ρῖς, and ἕλκε αὐτὸν, as they there have it.

V. 2. Canst thou put a Hook in his Nose, or bore his *Jaw* through with a Thorn?] The meaning is, that so vast an *animal* can't be easily taken as other Fishes. *Bochart* here observes that by the *Hebrew* word חוח, which we render a *Thorn*, is intended a *Hook*, sharp as a *Thorn*. Nor is our *English* word *Hook* very far from the *Hebrew*, the [ח] being turn'd either by ה, ס, or ה, and their ח almost as commonly render'd by a Simple *H.* as a χ, which is plain, not to instance in infinite other words, in *Havah* for *Chavah*, *Hammon* for *Chammon*, &c. Tho we are apt to believe something more is here intended then a *Hook sharp* as a Thorn, namely a Thorn it self, with which 'tis still usual for *Fishermen* to string their *Fish*, or bore their *Jaws* as we render it, and which might perhaps be formerly made use of even to catch *little Fishes*.

V. 5.] Wilt thou play with him, or wilt thou bind him for thy *maidens*?] The *Crocodile* is not tameable without extream difficulty, and often *devours Children*, who come too near the *Nile*.

6.] Shall they part him among the *Merchants*?] The vulgar has *inter Cananæos*, the seventy Φοινικῶν, the *Syr.* כנענאי, which *Bochart* thinks a mistake for סוריאי, the *Syrians*. But whether *Canaanites*, *Syrians*, or *Phœnicians*, 'tis all the same, for they were all *Merchants*, a proper name for an appellative, as sometimes the *Ismaelites*, or *Madianites*, tho none of 'em all, we suppose, dealt much in *Crocodiles*.

7.] Canst thou fill his skin with *barbed Irons*, or his Head with *Fish-Spears*?] The *Whales* we may, and do every year, serve in this manner whole shiploads of 'em in *Greenland*, nay we are told of a *Whale* in *Bermudas* that run away with half the weapons of the Country sticking in his back, nothing being more easily pierced then the soft substance of the *Whales*, whereas the skales are *impenetrable*, unless to *Cannon*, with which an *English-man* (we think 'twas) who was a *slave* in those parts, once kill'd one of those terrible Creatures, and thereby obtain'd his *Freedom*. But here *Bochart* takes notice of a strange Version of the seventy, to this purpose, "All the ships, if they shou'd joyn together, cou'd not bear one *Scale* of his *Tail*, nor all the *Fishers* ships his *Head*, which how they cou'd get out of the *Hebrew*, at least those Copys we now have, if that learned man himself cou'd not imagin, no body else must go about to do't. Tho for their meaning in those words, it may more easily be discover'd and defended, for if the *Seniors* thought the *Leviathan* here the *Whale*, nothing cou'd be more natural, who as the *Whalefishers* tell us, with one *stroke* of his Tail will break the *Ribbs* of a good *Lighter*, and if his *Head* shou'd peep over the *Waist* of a little *Jolo*, 'twou'd be likely the *Seamen* wou'd not care for his *Company*. Nay, this might hold in a less degree, of the *Cocodile* in the *Nile*, who may, 'tis probable, overturn the *Boats* as well as the *Hippopotamus* before mention'd; and *Ammianus* expressly affirms as much of him.

9.] Shall not one be cast down at the sight of him, &c.] The aspect of the *Crocodile* is so terrible that persons have been frighted out of their *wits* with beholding him, particularly a certain *Grammarian* is said to have been so sorely scar'd that he forgot his very *Letters*. And indeed some of 'em are describ'd very large and terrible, 40. 60. nay a hundred Foot long in the *West-Indys*.

14.] Who can open the *Doors* of his *Face*? His Teeth are terrible round about.] The *Crocodiles* mouth

mouth is deſcrib'd almoſt as dreadful as that of *Hell. Magno, horrendo hiatu*, ſays the forementiond author; and others ſay, that when he *Gapes* for his Prey, all his *long-head turns to mouth*, and you can ſee hardly any thing elſe. Some deſcribe 'em *Seven-Foot* large, and therefore *Martial* did not begrudg the old woman mouth, when he told her that hers was as large as an *Egyptian Crocodiles*. For his Teeth; he has a fine ſet of em, at leaſt threeſcore, ſome reckon him two or three hundred, and thoſe for variety of all ſorts and ſizes, ſome long and ſticking out, others like ſaws, and ſet together like the Teeth of a Comb, whence no wonder he's glad of the *Ichneumon* for his *Tooth-picker*.

15.] His ſcales are his guide, &c.] Or as in the *Margin, ſtrong pieces of ſhields*, or *Coat of Male*. This is clear of the *Crocodile*, as before, who is deſcrib'd by all authors, *ſcaly*, and *impenetrable*. But what's this to the *Whale*? Thoſe who think him the *Leviathan*, have here a very pleaſant anſwer. "He's as ſafe as if he had ſcales, therefore he may be ſaid to have 'em. Which if 'twere true, they might deſcribe him with *Horns*, and *Wings* too, becauſe as ſafe as if he had 'em, tho by their leaves, not ſo ſafe, for had he ſuch *Scales* on his *Back*, 'twou'd be almoſt utterly impoſſible to kill him, it being there, as before, they ſtrike him with their *Harpoons* and other Weapons.

18.] His Eyes are like Eyelids of the Morning.] A lively and beautiful compariſon. The *Crocodile* being very quick ſighted, and his Eyes, among the *Egyptians*, as *Horus* tells us, the *Hieroglyphick* for the Morning, being the firſt part of him that appears out of the *water*, as the *Sun* out of the Seas when it's riſing. Whereas the *Whale* is ſaid to be very *dimſighted*; and to loſe its way, and run againſt *Rocks*, or ſhores, when it loſes the *Muſculus*, its Pilot.

19.] Out of his mouth go burning *Lamps*, &c.] This is ſoften'd by the 70 and the vulgar with an ὡς, a *ſtout*. The meaning being no more then this, that this Animal, when 't has been long under the water and comes up again, breaths very ſtrongly and vehemently, and the Air which has been long contain'd within, breaks out ſo fiercely and violently from his mouth and Noſtrils, that it may be compar'd to *Flakes* of *Fire*.

22.] In his neck remaineth ſtrength.] The *Whale* has no neck at all, and therefore turns altogether, the *Crocodile* has a neck, tho a ſhort one, and therefore ſtronger, by the help of which, as *Ariſtotle* relates it, he moves and turns his head as he ſees occaſion.

25.] When he raiſeth up himſelf the mighty are afraid, by reaſon of breakings they purify themſelves.] When he *emerges* from the Water; they purify themſelves; ſome explain purification by the quite contrary, and think the meaning is, they are in ſuch fear that they do "*alvum ſolvere*, or, as *Druſius*, *nauſeant, vomunt*, we ſuppoſe as much as one as 'tother; the more natural ſence of the words ſeem to be: that they lookt on the ſight of a *Crocodile* as an unlucky, or *obſcene omen*, and therefore us'd ſome καθάρματα, or Purifications afterwards, to *avert* the *omen*; and had *Bochart* thought on this, he might have bronght good authors enough to prove it, as he does before from *Heliodorus*, that the very ſight of a *Crocodile* was thought an ill ſign, tho they did *eſcape* him; tho all this the 70 makes nothing but the Wild-beaſts being afraid of him.

26.] The ſword of him that layeth at him cannot hold, &c.] All this, with what follows, relates to the *impenetrability* of his *Scales* already mention'd, and can agree to none more properly then the *Crocodile*, whoſe skin not only defys *Sword* and *Spear*, but is *Piſtol*, and *Muſquet-Proof*, which as before, can by no means be ſaid of the *Whale*.

31.] He makes the deep to boyl like a pot, the Sea like a pot of ointment.] By ſtirring violently the water and mud, like a pot of oint-ment, perhaps, becauſe of ſmell of the *Crocodile*, as ſweet as muſk; and *Nilus* is often call'd the *Sea*, both in Scripture and other writers, which clears the Texts in the beginning by *Bochart* aſcrib'd to the *Whale*.

33.] On Earth there is not his like;] or rather on the *duſt*, as *Bochart*: but what's this to the *Whale*? Tho very proper to this vaſt amphibious Creature, to whom no other Reptile can be compar'd.

34.] He beholdeth all high things.] Tho he's ſo ſhort leg'd and low, he dares ſet upon the talleſt *Animals*, *Horſes*, *Camels*, *Tygars*, *Elephants*. And thus much of theſe two vaſt Creatures, the *Behemoth* and *Leviathan*, and of the nobleſt deſcription, (except that of the *Horſe* by the ſame author,) in this or any other Hiſtory.

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